

North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre Newsletter August 2019

Notes from our Chairman

"Summertime and the living is easy" as the song goes, but the Members' Centre hasn't been taking things too easy over the Summer and now we are busy getting ready for our autumn and winter events. We've enjoyed some really interesting visits over the last couple of months (see reports in this Newsletter) and we have one more outside activity at Pitmedden Garden during September (booking form attached) to round off the Summer before settling into our schedule of talks and concerts. We have a very special fundraising concert planned in November and are hoping that all our members will not only attend that, but will also help by selling some tickets, encouraging friends and family to come along and join us for what promises to be a fascinating and enjoyable evening. Obviously, the more tickets we sell the more money we raise to support the NTS and in particular the wonderful properties we have here in the North East. There's sure to be something in the programme to interest you. I know I'm looking forward to the next few months' events and to seeing you all there as well.

Margaret Alexander

Looking Back – A Review of Recent Events.....

June

Did the Aberdeen City Fathers who commissioned the Beach Ballroom back in the 1920s ever dream it might be celebrating its 90th birthday in the year 2019? Well back in May it did and our Members' Centre went along to join in some of the celebrations. Not only did we have a talk and guided tour of the building by the Ballroom Manager, John Johnstone and have the opportunity to browse the special exhibition highlighting the Ballroom's history and the many famous entertainers who have performed there, but we also enjoyed an excellent afternoon tea in the elegant Promenade Room, providing the opportunity for members to reminisce about their own Ballroom adventures (and misadventures!)



The Art Deco gem that is the Beach Ballroom was part of Aberdeen's Beach Improvement Scheme originally intended to boost the city as a tourist attraction as well as make this stretch of coastline more attractive to locals. Its legendary sprung maple dance floor 'floats' on 1,400 steel springs, making it one of the largest of its kind in Britain and supposedly allowing dancers to dance the night away without feeling tired. It was a place of glamour and romance. Many people met and wooed their future spouse there at the fountain that once cascaded in the middle of the dance floor as its resident 12-piece band played. Romance and glamour took a setback though when the British Admiralty Board commandeered the Beach Ballroom during the Second World War, with servicemen sleeping on beds laid out on the dance floor. After the war the Ballroom re-established itself as an entertainment venue. Its reputation spread and bands such as The Beatles, The Who, Small Faces and Pink Floyd signed up to perform.

Having had mixed fortunes during the later part of the 20th Century, including a devastating fire in 1993, the Ballroom is once again one of the premier venues in Aberdeen, hosting concerts, conferences, dances, weddings and even award winning funeral teas! It is still owned and run by Aberdeen City Council and it was clear that the people who work there just love this place. The fact that the Art Deco grandeur has been so lovingly restored on a budget is down to the inventive, resourceful staff and the painstaking care that they take in making sure that the Beach Ballroom remains, in the words of John Johnstone, "The People's Ballroom"

July



We were privileged to be granted access to the beautiful grounds of Drumrossie Mansion House in Inch just a couple of days before the gardens opened to the public as part of Scotland's Garden Scheme, so everything was looking at its very best – although I suspect these wonderful gardens always look pretty good. The long, low style of the house belies both its history and its size. It may look like a large steading but in fact the house is a considerable mansion house, parts of which date back to the 12th Century, a significant part from the 17th Century and some rebuilt areas from the 1870s. Our host and guide for the day was the

owner Mr. Hugh Robertson who introduced us to the history of the house and explained how he has developed the grounds, including construction about 10 years ago of a large wildlife pond, which now looks as though it has been part of the landscape forever. The main focus of our visit however was the three acres of landscaped lawns, formal walled garden, veg and greenhouse area and newly planted orchard. The main question on everyone's lips was "How on earth does Hugh manage to keep all this looking so good? Hugh remained modest about his efforts but there was plenty of advice and tips about garden maintenance shared during the tour before we adjourned to enjoy tea and delicious home bakes provided by the ladies of Inch Parish Church. The weather was kind, the setting was glorious and our "Thank You" round of applause for Hugh was also appreciated by the herd of Shetland ponies that Hugh keeps to graze on the wilder areas. What a perfect afternoon!



Looking Forward - What's Coming Up for the Members' Centre.....

September

Come and join us on **10th September at 6:30 pm** for the last of our garden themed events for this year. Following on from our successful herb and foraging evening last year we are back at Pitmedden again, but this time the emphasis is on things you can do in your own garden at this time of year. Carole Hawthorn, who co-hosted last year's herb event, has been instrumental in the development of the herb garden and who is a seasonal gardener at Pitmedden, will host a "practical tips" workshop. The main focus will be on the productive garden but there will also be the opportunity to access the garden out of hours without other visitors, ask questions and if you bring along a paper bag or envelope you might even leave with some seeds.....

Numbers will be limited so booking is essential. Cost is £5 including refreshments.

Booking form attached.

October

Fyvie Castle will be the venue for our October talk, which will take place on **Thursday 10th October at 7:30 pm**. David Jennings will present on "**Histories and Mysteries of Aden Park**" a virtual tour of recent discoveries at Aden. Booking is not required for this event which is free to our members (Visitors £3). The usual tea, coffee and home bakes will be available for purchase after the talk. Hope to see you all there.

November



We have something **very** special planned as our big fundraising event on the evening of **2nd November**. In order to accommodate what we are hoping will be a considerable crowd, we will be at a new venue for us, Daviot Village Hall.

PlaidSong are a duo drawing on an age-old tradition of finding and learning songs from the many cultural sources of Scotland, adapting and reworking old tunes and new words. Their eclectic programme of music, song and stories is sure to appeal to a wide audience. More details of the event will be available soon but for

now make sure you have this marked in your diaries and make sure you tell all our friends and families to do the same. We're hoping to pack out that Hall!

What else is on

For more details, booking etc. check out properties on the NTS website or on their Facebook pages

Haddo House	Fyvie Castle
27th August – “The Merry Widow” Opera Bohemia 29th August – Handlebards present “The Tempest” 31st August – Bat Breakfast 1st September – Hit the Road Motorcycle event 22nd September – Affa Fine Artisan Afternoon 29th September – Fungi Fact and Fiction	23rd August – Summer Garden Walk 24-25th August – Oh Help! Oh No! It's a Gruffalo at Fyvie Castle 31st August – Outdoor Cinema – Dirty Dancing 28th September – Scottish Tree Festival 23rd October – Simply Squirrels
Pitmedden Garden	
31st August – “Plant Lore” talk and tour at Pitmedden Garden 8th September – Evening Garden Walk 29th September – Apple Sunday	

What's on a little further afield....

Crathes Castle	Drum Castle
25 th August – Drawing with Light: Printmaking workshop 12 th September – Fungi Fact and Fiction 14 th September – PIM Running Festival 15 th October – Simply Squirrels 16 th October – Crathes Acorn Day 8 th December – Christmas at the Wildlife Hide	Now until 17 th November – “A Considered Place” Exhibition 6 th September – Susan Mowatt – Weaving Matters 2020 14 th September – Exclusively Highlands Autumn Food and Craft Festival 22 nd September – Fungi Fact and Fiction 17 th October – Bushcraft Skills 2 nd November – Scottish Tree Festival at Drum
Castle Fraser	
23rd August – Family Bat Evening 8th September – Fungi Fact and Fiction 24th October – Welly Walk 15th November – Whisky Tasting	

Ever wonder where the money goes?

As you already know from the AGM, this year we will be awarding £1000 each to Haddo, Fyvie and Pitmedden. As far as possible we like to specify that the money will go towards something that the property wants and needs but which would otherwise not be covered by their normal budget. This year we requested that the money for Haddo be used to provide a replacement greenhouse, that Pitmedden put their donation towards providing special customised conservation covers for the garden statuary and that Fyvie add the money to the “Guardians of Fyvie” appeal. We hope to be able to show you the results of your continued NTS support in future editions of the Newsletter.

News from around the Trust

Sir Moir Lockhead's four year term of office as Chair of the NTS Board is coming to an end. The Trustees have now confirmed that Sir Mark Jones will take on the role of Chair in August. Sir Mark's achievements in the museum and heritage sector are extremely impressive. He was the Director of the National Museums of Scotland from 1992 to 2001 where he oversaw the project to create and open the 'Museum of Scotland'. He then became the Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Voting is now well underway for the 2019 Board of Trustees election. Four Trustees are completing their terms of office – two are eligible to stand for a second term of office. Elections are being held for all four Trustee vacancies. The elections have been split into 4 different categories to showcase the relevant skills and knowledge required for each respective role on the Board of Trustees. You can vote for one candidate only in each category. Voting closes in September, but why wait? Vote online now! <https://ntsvoting.org.uk/>

[NTS Annual General Meeting - Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, 2 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3NY](#)

[Saturday 21 September 2019](#)

If you would prefer to vote in person you can always plan to attend the NTS AGM. Going along to the AGM is a great chance to hear about how hard the NTS has been working to protect Scotland's national and natural treasures for everyone to enjoy. Information about some of the big projects that have been completed in the past year will be shared. In addition, plans for nurturing NTS gardens and sharing new approaches to enhance visitor experience will be discussed. As well as the election of Trustees already mentioned the formal business of the AGM will include the election of the President and Vice-Presidents, presenting the Annual Review and Accounts 2018/19 for approval, electing auditors and looking at prices for the ordinary membership subscription.

Online registration is open (<https://www.nts.org.uk/our-members/annual-general-meeting>) or you can still register to attend the AGM in person, on the morning of the meeting from 10.15am at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

After the formal business of the AGM is finished and following lunch there will be a special gathering of Friends' groups and Members' Centres to which we are cordially invited.

Thank You! As always we would like to thank Mackies of Scotland for their help with the postage of our Newsletters.

NE Aberdeenshire Members' Centre the National Trust for Scotland
Tuesday 10th September 2019
Garden Workshop at Pitmedden
starting at 6.30 pm. Cost £5 per person includes refreshments.

From:

Tel.

email address

I would like tickets for the Garden Workshop at Pitmedden on Tuesday 10th September 2019
I enclose £..... In payment for these tickets
(Cheques should be made payable to: North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre the National Trust for Scotland)

I am happy to take my car and another.....passengers

I would like assistance with the travel to Pitmedden

Please delete as required

Please return to:

Dr H P Shaw 2 Aulton of Fochel Steadings, Oldmeldrum, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire. AB51 0AT

Tel: 01651 851411

Email: stephen.shaw74@alumni.imperial.ac.uk

before Thursday 5th September 2019 enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for return of the tickets.
